

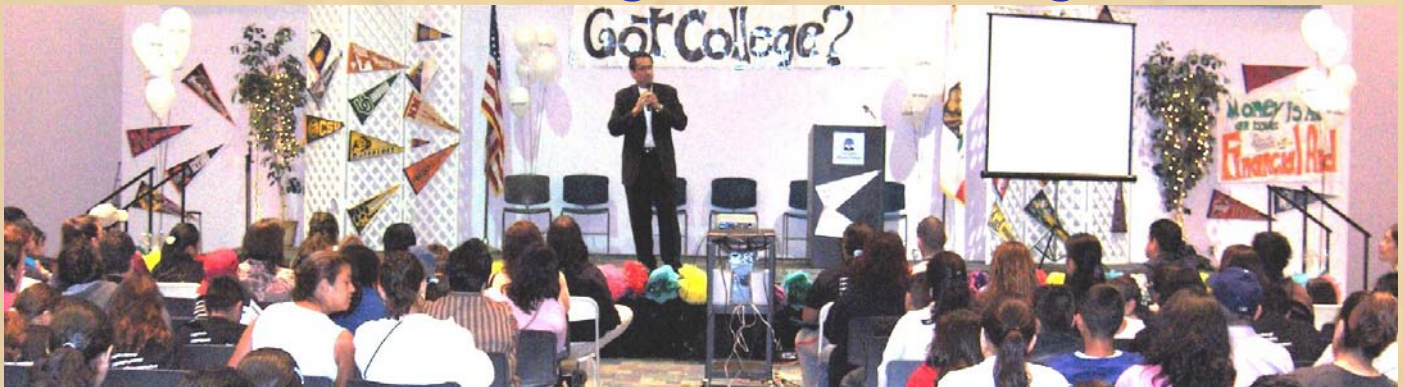
Senator Richard Alarcón

News from the 20th District

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Alarcón's 'Got College' Event is Huge Success



Students and Parents Hear Inspiring Messages and Valuable Information about College Requirements

(Sylmar, CA) Hundreds of San Fernando Valley Fifth Graders and their parents converged on Mission College, in Sylmar recently for motivational speeches and workshops. The "Got College" conference marked the culmination of a week of visits by Senator Richard Alarcon and his partners to fifth grade classes in the San Fernando Valley with the message that proper planning for a successful college career must begin by the Fifth Grade. "That's when students who aspire to a college education -and their parents- must be vigilant to ensure that the curriculum the students are taught will allow them to do well when they take the required courses in high school. All the educational building blocks must be in place in order to help these students reach their goals," says the Senator.

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LA Schools Reform Based on Alarcón Legislation ***Senator Seeks to Expand LA Success to Rest of California***

(Sacramento, CA) Senator Richard Alarcón, Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on College and University Outreach commends the LAUSD Board's recent decision to institute access to college preparatory curriculum next year and phase in college-prep curriculum as a standard requirement (with some exemptions) by the 2012 school year. Senator Alarcón and his staff worked closely with an umbrella coalition of pro-reform organizations called the 'Communities for Educational Equity' to help draft and promote the historic reform passed by the LAUSD School Board by a vote of 6-1. Previously in the LAUSD, only 20 percent of all high school seniors graduated with the courses necessary to be eligible for entrance into California's four-year institutions.

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Senator Seeks Creative Approach to Racial Tensions Ozomatli and other Artists Recruited to Build Harmony



The musical group, Ozomatli is committed to helping bridge the cultural tensions that are leading to school violence.

(San Fernando Valley) Senator Richard Alarcón is very concerned about the recent outbreak of racially motivated violence at Jefferson and Grant High Schools. The Senator is working on a creative approach to bridge the gap between the groups who are at odds. He is tapping the talents of creative artists who are well respected among the high school-aged students and who have consistently spread a message of cultural harmony and understanding. Details of the project are still being developed. But one high-profile group who has committed to the project is Ozomatli. The group's music is a brew of Latin Salsa with urban hip-hop and jazz funk. Ozomatli's most recent release was "Street Signs," which debuted last year.

Now Ozomatli is working with Senator Alarcón to blend not only divergent musical forms, but the people whose cultures are represented in that music. Watch for more information on this exciting project soon.

Senator Alarcon's Wall of Honor



Flanked by Senator Richard Alarcon and Speaker of the Senate Don Perata, Marco Torres of San Fernando High School accepts his proclamation as "Teacher of the Year."

San Fernando High School's Marco Torres is Teacher of the Year

(Sacramento) San Fernando High School teacher Marco Torres received Senate District 20's Teacher of the Year Award from Senator Richard Alarcón on the floor of the Senate Chambers at the California State Capitol. Besides being a social studies teacher, Mr. Torres is also the media coach, and the education technology director at San Fernando High School. Torres was a member of Senator Alarcón's City Council Staff. Torres has received numerous honors and awards for his work helping students empower themselves through the mastery of multimedia. He serves as one of Apple's Distinguished Educators and is an advisory board member of The George Lucas Educational Foundation.

Senator Alarcon Awarded Truman Award for Outstanding Lawmaker



(Left to Right) Assemblymember Paul Koretz; DPSFV Officers- Agi Kessler, Jeff Daar, and Damian Carroll. Senator Richard Alarcon, DPSFV Officers; Andrew Lachman, Larry Furman (Dorothy Mayer Award Winner) and David Phelps at celebration honoring Alarcón as Legislator of the Year.

DP/SFV Selects Alarcon by Unanimous Vote

(San Fernando Valley) State Senator Richard Alarcón has been selected as the 2004-2005 Recipient of the Democratic Party of the San Fernando Valley's **Truman Award for the Outstanding Elected Official**. The award was presented on June 11, 2005. DP/SFV, the coordinating body for the coalition of 25 Democratic Clubs in 7 Assembly Districts in the Greater San Fernando Valley area, selected the second term State Senator from a pool of three nominees by a unanimous vote of both its executive committee and its general membership.

Senator Alarcón serves as:

- Majority Whip of the State Senate
- Chair, Joint Committee of the Legislature to Develop a Master Plan to End Poverty in California,
- Chair, Senate Select Committee on College and University Outreach
- Chair, Committee on Labor and Industrial Relations.

Alarcon's Young Senators Run State Capitol for a Day



(Sacramento) Nine months of studying about the state legislative process culminated with a hands-on learning experience for 23 San Fernando Valley high school seniors at the State Capitol. The students participated in a two-day trip to Sacramento on June 26 & 27, 2005. While in Sacramento, the "Young Senators" toured the Capitol, dined with State leaders such as Secretary of State, Bruce McPherson and became familiar with dorm life at Cal State Sacramento. On day 2, they participated in mock committee hearings, held a mock senate session in the actual Senate Chambers and met with state legislators and Daily News Reporter, Harrison Sheppard. The program was established in 1999 by Senator Richard Alarcón and is paid for by private contributions. Applications for the 2006 Young Senators program are available by calling (818) 901-5588.

2005 Young Senators- (Left to right) Delmy Delgado, Nellie Guzman, Alejandro Navarro, Maria Bautista, Aleida Arenas, Susanna Carmona, Vianca Osorio, Luiza Jibinlian, Diana Lopez-Guevara, Benjamin Runao, Merari Ramirez, Jaqueline Serrano, Alexander Camarillo, Sama Fazi, Gerardo Gandara, Cynthia Ortega, Steven Cardona, Susana Cervantes, Gabriel Flores, Ana Bhav, and Elizabeth Acuna.



KCAL 9's Sylvia Lopez shares info on "Careers of the 21st Century" with "Got College?" participants.

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Currently, less than 20% of all LAUSD students who graduate from high school have completed the coursework necessary to apply to a four-year public institution. "Far too many graduating seniors with strong grade point averages are learning only upon applying for college that they don't have the necessary courses to be accepted -because no one ever advised them of the course requirements. It is a problem that is weakening our economy, making important job-creating industry overlook Southern California as a potential site and setting our young people on a course that minimizes their lifelong work productivity. We must reverse this trend," says the Senator. The goal of the "Got College" Conference was to inform students and their parents of college course requirements while the students are young enough to adjust their course choices.

The event also featured workshops on financial aid, family literacy and careers of the 21st century and a Colleges and Careers Fair. The conference was sponsored by Senator Richard Alarcón, Chair of the Senate Select Committee on College and University Outreach, Families in Schools, LAUSD Districts 1 & 2, San Fernando Healthy Start, Project Grad, and Cal State University Northridge.

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"I believe that when you touch a child's hand you touch the future. This bold step undertaken by the courageous leaders of the educational community in Los Angeles will now hand those same children the opportunity to meet the 21st century- prepared for either a higher education or the choice high-skilled jobs of the future. We should now expand these same opportunities to all of our state's students."

The LAUSD 'A-G' plan closely mirrors Senator Alarcón's legislative proposals to ensure that all students who request college-preparatory courses have access to those classes. Senator Alarcon is the author of Senate Bill 925 which would ensure that all California Students who desire a college course requirement will have access to that course. Previously, only half of the courses taught in LA's high schools fulfilled coursework requirements for California's four year institutions. "This assertive reform will level the playing field for inner-city and low-income students by giving them the tools for success. It will help improve our economy overall by producing a well-prepared workforce that can succeed in the good-paying, high skilled jobs of the future. Further, it will strengthen the priorities of the entire educational system by placing the focus on preparing students for more rigorous coursework -earlier in their academic careers," says Senator Alarcón.

Senator Alarcón's Contact Information

Please contact us. We look forward to hearing from you.

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Three Generations- Senator Alarcon, his Father- Small Business Owner, Anthony Alarcon and the Senator's son Armando, share a moment in the 1990s in the same upholstery shop where Richard learned important lessons about business.

Making Payroll

A Life Lesson at His Dad's Upholstery Shop Taught Senator Alarcón a Common Sense Approach to Worker's Compensation

By State Senator Richard Alarcón

I can still remember my first job in my father's upholstery shop. I'd set the numbers on the Pay-Master check-printing machine and pull the lever to print the payroll. My father often stood beside me overseeing the figures and taking pride in the process.

His pride taught me a lesson in life that I'll never forget. As a small business owner, my father felt a sense of responsibility- in meeting payroll so that his workers' families and ours could be clothed and fed.

Now as your State Senator I'll never forget that small businesses are the engine of our economic growth because they create most of the new jobs in our state. That's also why I understand the strain that high worker's compensation insurance rates put on a small businessperson's ability to make their payroll and make a decent profit.

There are those who say the workers' compensation system has been reformed and the rates will take care of themselves.

But consider these facts:

- A January report by the Union Bank of California says 92% of small businesses surveyed said their workers' compensation costs remained the same or increased last year;
- The California Small Business Association tells my office that only 20%-25% of their members are seeing any lowering of their workers' compensation insurance costs, and the reductions are averaging only about 10%;
- Workers' compensation premiums went up by 200%-300%, but the insurance commissioner reports there has been an average decline in rates of a mere 16%.

So where are the saving which were created by the reforms going? Official agencies report that insurance companies are paying out only 45¢ in claim costs for every dollar of premium they collect –giving them huge profits (55%) even before their investment earnings.

That's why I have introduced legislation to provide transparency to the rate setting process and set fair rates. The bill has been stalled in committee this year but I won't give up. Unless small businesses see real rate relief, I plan to reintroduce it next year.

My bill, SB46, would establish a commission which would publicly monitor the workers' compensation insurance companies' costs, profit margins and risks and then set fair rates. In this way, we can keep insurance companies from gouging employers and make sure the savings from the reforms are being passed on to the employers. A similar regulating system is used for home and auto insurance rates and that industry is doing just fine.

At the end of every pay period it's the small business owner who is faced with having to pull the lever on the proverbial pay-master machine. I say they deserve a fair shake.